

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

Report Release Date: July 12, 2011

**Review of the Death of Adriana Kayla Hernandez
of Tulsa and Creek Counties of Oklahoma**

Dates and Outcome of Investigations and Actions Taken by the Department of Human Services; Actions Taken by the District Attorney; and Dates and Summary of Judicial Proceedings and Rulings of the Court

General Information

On May 9, 2011, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report pursuant to Title 10A Section 1-6-105 in regard to the death of Adriana Hernandez, a one-year-old child who died on May 4, 2011. On May 11, 2011, Mr. David Bridgeman, Adriana's uncle, was charged with Felony Child Abuse Murder and one count of Felony Child Neglect. In addition, Ms. Paula Najjar, Mr. Bridgeman's girlfriend, was charged with one count of Felony Permitting Child Abuse and one count of Felony Child Neglect.

Introduction

According to the OKDHS case documentation, Adriana and her sibling resided in the state of New Mexico. Reportedly, the biological parents allowed the children to visit Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najjar during the month of April 2011. In addition, the OKDHS case documentation indicated that the biological parents of the children were scheduled to pick-up the children from Oklahoma before Mother's Day (May 8, 2011).

Authorization

Title 10A, Section 1-6-105, B, D and E, of the Oklahoma Statutes, states:

B. When a person responsible for a child has been charged by information or indictment with committing a crime resulting in the death or near death of the child, there shall be a presumption that the best interest of the public is served by public disclosure of certain information concerning:

1. The circumstances of the investigation of the death or near death of the child; and
2. Any other investigations concerning that child, or other children while living in the same household, within:

- a. three (3) years of the death or near-death, and
- b. one (1) year after the death or near-death.

D. 1. At any time subsequent to seven (7) days after the date the person responsible for the child has been criminally charged, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth shall, upon request, release certain information to the public within sixty (60) days of the request as follows:

a. a confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been made concerning the alleged victim or other children while living in the same household and whether an investigation has begun,

b. confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether previous reports of suspected child abuse or neglect have been made and the dates thereof, a summary of those previous reports, the dates and outcome of any investigations or actions taken by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission in response to any previous report of child abuse or neglect, and the specific recommendation made to the district attorney and any subsequent action taken by the district attorney,

c. the dates of any judicial proceedings prior to the death or near death of the child,

d. recommendations submitted by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission shall be provided in writing including recommendations made at the hearing as they relate to custody or placement of a child, and

e. the rulings of the court.

2. Specific recommendations made by the Commission described in any progress reports of a pending case submitted to the court may be disclosed by the Commission.

E. Any disclosure of information pursuant to this section shall not identify or provide an identifying description of any complainant or reporter of child abuse or neglect, and shall not identify the name of the child victim's siblings or other children living in the same household, the parent or other person responsible for the child, or any other member of the household, other than the person criminally charged.

Identifiers:

Childs's name: Adriana Kayla Hernandez

Date of Birth: July 13, 2009

Alleged Perpetrators: David Bridgeman and Paula Najar

Sibling: Four-years-old

Cousin 1: Two-years-old

Cousin 2: Seven-years-old

Case History

Report 1 July 23, 2009 (Creek County)

The OKDHS received a referral alleging that David Bridgeman, Paula Najar, and cousin 1 resided in a home that was infested with roaches. Reportedly, roaches were observed to be located in the kitchen, on the "couch", in the cousin's crib, and in the cousin's car seat. The referral also alleged that the roaches were observed to cover the flooring of the home. The referral further alleged that the home contained multiple bags of trash located in the living room and rotted food located on the kitchen counter tops, and in the refrigerator. The referral alleged that Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najar did not provide appropriate care to the cousin or seek medical attention needed by the cousin. Reportedly, the cousin was consistently observed with thick wax in her ears and oily and matted hair. In addition, the cousin did not receive a medical exam regarding the Mongolian spots located on the back and below the left shoulder blade of cousin 1.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority Two Investigation with a seven day response time to contact the child victim. Those persons interviewed during the investigation included cousin 1, cousin 2, Mr. Bridgeman, Ms. Najar, and two collateral witnesses.

The OKDHS documented that during the initial home visit, roaches were observed throughout the house and that during the subsequent home visit, the home was observed to be very clean with no roaches to be found in the home. The OKDHS also documented that cousin 1 and cousin 2 were observed to be clean and healthy. The OKDHS further documented that both of the collateral witnesses reported no concerns regarding the care of the children provided by Mr. Bridgeman or Ms. Najar.

The OKDHS documented a finding of Services Not Needed regarding the allegations noted in the report. The OKDHS also documented that an In Home Safety Assessment was completed on September 9, 2009, however, the documentation reviewed by the OJSO did not contain a completed assessment.

Report 2 May 24, 2010 (Creek County)

The OKDHS received a referral alleging that cousin 2 exhibited aggressive and sexually inappropriate behaviors. The referral also alleged that the cousin verbalized homicidal and suicidal ideations.

The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority Two Assessment with a fifteen day response time to contact the child victims. Those persons interviewed during the assessment included Mr. Bridgeman, Ms. Najjar, cousin 2, one relative, and two collateral witnesses.

The OKDHS documented interview with Mr. Bridgeman noted that he reported that he tried to remain calm when he disciplined cousin 2. The OKDHS documented that Mr. Bridgeman reported that he was placed on probation and received a two year deferred sentence regarding a misdemeanor cruelty to animals offense. The OKDHS also documented that Ms. Najjar reported that she does not discipline cousin 2.

The OKDHS documented that the relative and collateral witnesses reported that cousin 2 was aggressive and that it appeared to be a reaction to the recent death of a close relative.

OKDHS Assessment of Child Safety July 22, 2010

The OKDHS documented that based on the Safety Assessment it was determined that the children were in an environment without any safety threats.

Report 3 May 4, 2011 (Tulsa County)

The OKDHS received a referral alleging that Adriana died while in the care of her uncle, Mr. Bridgeman and his girlfriend, Ms. Najjar. The referral also alleged that Adriana's sibling, cousin 1 and cousin 2 resided in the home with Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najjar. The referral further alleged that Adriana was observed to have bruises on her forehead, above her left eye, her left cheek, and the bridge of her nose. According to the report, the surviving children were observed to be filthy. The referral alleged that dinner plates were observed to be lining the walkway of the home and that the plates appeared to have been in the walkway for weeks. The referral also alleged that soiled diapers were observed to be located in the kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority One Investigation with contact to be made with the child victims within the same day of the report.

The OKDHS documented a finding of Substantiated-Court Intervention Recommended regarding the allegation of Threat of Harm of cousin 1 and cousin 2 by Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najjar. The OKDHS also documented that sibling, cousin 1, and cousin 2 were placed in the custody of the OKDHS on May 4, 2011.

Report 4 May 6, 2011 (Tulsa County)

The OKDHS received a referral alleging that Adriana died while in the care of her uncle, Mr. Bridgeman and his girlfriend, Ms. Najjar. The referral also alleged that Adriana's sibling, cousin 1 and cousin 2 resided in the home with Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najjar. The report further alleged threat of harm of Adriana by her biological parents.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority One Investigation with contact to be made with the child victims within the same day of the report.

The OKDHS documented interviews with Adriana's biological parents noted that Adriana and her sibling had been in the care of Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najar "for the past month." The OKDHS documented interviews also noted that the children were to spend the Easter holiday with Mr. Bridgeman and Ms. Najar, and that Adriana's parents were scheduled to pick-up their children from Oklahoma before Mother's Day (May 8, 2011).

The OKDHS documented the finding of Unsubstantiated-Services Recommended as to the allegation of threat of harm of Adriana by her biological parents.